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I. TENTH EMERGENCY SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONVENED ON SETTLEMENTS ISSUES; RESOLUTION ADOPTED

On 14 April, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held its 228th meeting to consider the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the proposed emergency session of the General Assembly. Following the Security Council's failure to adopt a resolution concerning Israel's actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, at its meetings in March (see March 1997 bulletin), the Group of Arab States had requested that the General Assembly convene an emergency session under the 1950 General Assembly resolution 377 (V) of 3 November 1950, entitled "Uniting for peace," to consider illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory (A/ES-10/1). The Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries supported the request (A/51/852; A/51/853). At the meeting, the Committee also elected Mr. George Saliba (Malta) as Rapporteur.

On 15 April, the Chairman of the Committee addressed a letter to the Secretary-General expressing support for the request that an emergency special session of the General Assembly be convened. The text of the letter is reproduced below (see A/51/876):

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to express the most serious concern at the continued construction of an Israeli settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim mountain south of East Jerusalem, in violation of the obligations of the occupying Power under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and in disregard of the unanimous opposition of the international community. The Committee believes that these actions, as well as other measures taken by the occupying Power in recent months in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, threaten the very foundations of the peace process and lead to a dangerous exacerbation of tensions in the area.

Accordingly, the Committee wishes to express its support for the request made by the States members of the Arab League, and endorsed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, for the convening of an emergency special session of the General Assembly pursuant to its resolution 377 (V) of 3 November 1950, in order to consider these developments and to adopt an appropriate resolution.

The Committee calls on the parties to the peace process, as well as on all States, to do everything in their power to protect and save the peace process at this crucial juncture.

I have the honour to request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly under agenda item 35.

(Signed) Ibra Deguène KA
Chairman, Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

On 24 April, the Tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly was convened. The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed the Assembly. The text of the Chairman's statement is reproduced below (see A/ES-10/PV.1):

Mr. Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (*interpretation from French*): The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People deeply regrets the events that have led to the convening of this emergency special session of the General Assembly: Israel's continuing intransigence with regard to the establishment of settlements in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and the Security Council's inability to issue a pronouncement on this question, despite the grave implications for peace and security in the region and for the future of the peace process.

Five emergency special sessions of the General Assembly have had to be held over the years to deal with various distressing aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, more than for any other crisis situation that the United Nations has had to deal with since its inception. The last emergency session, the ninth, was held in 1982, at the height of the cold war. It took a whole series of meetings at that emergency special session to deal with the issues raised following increasing repression and a series of bloody incidents in the occupied territories, including those that took place at the Holy Places in Jerusalem, in addition to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the evacuation of Palestinian leaders from Beirut.

Those were some of the darkest hours in the Palestinian struggle for the exercise of legitimate national rights, including the right to self-determination and national independence. They were also times of great international tension and fears of a future lurching out of control in a region that had witnessed four destructive wars since the end of the Second World War. The firm resolutions that were adopted by the General Assembly at the time, and the frantic search for peace that followed those events, demonstrated to the intense concern of the international community and its will to spare no effort to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict.

That concern still exists today, while, over the past few years, it seemed that we might achieve the dream of a new international climate of cooperation, with the resolution of long-standing regional conflicts and the unanimous desire of the peoples of the Middle East to establish an era of peace that would bring the bloodshed to an end. The mutual recognition of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1993, the signing of the Declaration of Principles and the subsequent withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and some areas of the West Bank, as well as the establishment of an elected Palestinian Authority, were historic milestones along the road to peace that the international community encouraged and nurtured with political and financial support.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was clearly delighted by those positive developments, which demonstrated to all of us that peace is possible and that serious negotiations between parties, inspired by good faith and mutual respect, can bring about a momentum for peace, even when such negotiations deal with thorny and apparently insoluble issues.

The progress made on the ground to date, such as the withdrawal of Israeli forces from parts of the occupied territories, the establishment of a Palestinian administration and the many areas of cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis, were merely a dream in 1982, if in fact anybody dared have such dreams at that time. Again, the process was very difficult; nobody thought that it would be easy to bury old grievances and conflicting interests. Today, those joint efforts make the progress reached over the past few years seem even more precious. All those important achievements have encouraged the Committee to recommend whatever steps are

necessary to prevent extremists on all sides from reducing them to nothing.

It should be noted, however, that those achievements remain extremely fragile, as events have demonstrated time and again. The renewal of tensions and incidents in recent weeks should provide a constant warning and reminder that if we allow the peace process to fail, the entire region will enter a renewed cycle of violence and hatred whose effects might prove impossible to bring under control for several months or longer.

While condemning any resort to violence, particularly against civilians, the Committee wishes to recall that the peace process made progress because both parties accepted the principle of land for peace and of a negotiated solution, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and with the Declaration of Principles of 1993 and subsequent agreements. The international community is united behind this approach, which, on the one hand, recognizes the right of all States of the region, including Israel, to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, and, on the other hand, reaffirms the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, recognizes the legitimate rights and claims of the Palestinian people and provides for negotiations between the parties on the fundamental issues of the conflict: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, future boundaries and modalities for peaceful cooperation between the peoples of the region. The Committee is convinced that this approach, which has brought about the most significant results in the peace efforts undertaken since 1947, remains the only true means of moving forward and reinforcing the process launched in 1993.

Regrettably, the continuing military occupation by Israeli forces of large areas of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, the presence of a large number of armed settlers in the occupied territories, the frequent roadblocks and boundary closures and the serious damage caused to the Palestinian economy - all of them unilateral measures - have a negative impact on the search for a just and peaceful settlement that respects the legitimate rights and claims of all the parties.

The Committee believes that the Israeli Government should above all recognize that the search for peace and justice in the region, with account being taken of Palestinian and Arab claims, cannot, in the final analysis, but be in Israel's interest, as long as that country truly wishes to get along with its neighbours in peaceful coexistence.

History reminds us that peace must always be based on compromise between the parties in order for it to take lasting root in the hearts and minds of people. An imposed peace always bears within it the seeds of future conflict.

It is for these reasons that Committee has strongly deplored the decisions taken by Israel that run counter to these objectives and agreements, in particular the decisions regarding Jerusalem, the settlements and the collective coercive measures, which, instead of reinforcing confidence and promoting reconciliation, create greater difficulties and feed distrust and disillusionment in the peace process.

The Committee has examined those measures in detail and has expressed its opinion, both in its report to the General Assembly and in its Bureau's press releases, as well as in my statements to the Security Council and the General Assembly on various occasions in my capacity as the Chairman of the Committee.

We also believe that the international community, expressing itself through the General Assembly, has not only the right but also the duty to remain closely involved in the various aspects of this issue for which it has a clear responsibility, until the conflict is satisfactorily resolved in accordance with United Nations resolutions and international law. Let us not forget that some 50 years ago it was the General Assembly itself that partitioned Palestine and decided to create two States, one Arab and the other Jewish, constituting an economic

union. The General Assembly also declared Jerusalem international territory.

The Committee believes that the international principles embodied in the various resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council are still as valid today as they were before, even if history or force has created different realities on the ground. The fact that the parties have decided to engage in direct negotiations does nothing to invalidate these fundamental principles, nor does it negate the international community's obligation to take an interest in the situation in Palestine.

These are the reasons why the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has supported the convening of this emergency special session. The Committee sincerely hopes that this session will succeed in bringing an end to the settlement policy and to the other unilateral measures taken by the occupying Power. It especially hopes that it will restore confidence in the region and a climate conducive to the speedy resumption of the negotiations and the peace process, in the interest of peace and mutual understanding among all the peoples of the region.

On 25 April, the General Assembly adopted a resolution by a vote of 134 in favour to 3 against, with 11 abstentions. The text of the resolution is reproduced below:

ES-10/2. Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

The General Assembly,

Aware of the commencement, after the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/223 of 13 March 1997, of construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a new settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim to the south of East Jerusalem on 18 March 1997, and of other illegal Israeli actions in Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

Noting with regret that the Security Council, at its 3747th meeting, on 7 March 1997, and at its 3756th meeting, on 21 March 1997, twice failed to adopt a resolution on the actions referred to above, as a result of the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council,

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is solved in all its aspects,

Reaffirming also the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

Having considered the serious deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and in the Middle East in general, including the serious difficulties facing the Middle East peace process, as a result of recent Israeli actions and measures,

Affirming its support for the Middle East peace process, started at Madrid in 1991, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978, for the principle of land for peace and for the full and timely implementation of the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and of all commitments reached between the parties,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 51/223, and the relevant resolutions of the Security

Council, in particular those on Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, including resolutions 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968, 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979, 452 (1979) of 20 July 1979, 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980, 476 (1980) of 30 June 1980, 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, 672 (1990) of 12 October 1990 and 1073 (1996) of 28 September 1996,

Reaffirming that the international community, through the United Nations, has a legitimate interest in the question of the City of Jerusalem and the protection of the unique spiritual and religious dimension of the City, as foreseen in relevant United Nations resolutions on this matter,

Reaffirming also the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,1/ and the Regulations annexed to the Hague Convention IV of 1907 2/ to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and all other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967,

Recalling the obligation of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to respect and ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances, in accordance with article 1 of the Convention,

Conscious of the serious dangers arising from persistent violation and grave breaches of the Convention and the responsibilities arising therefrom,

Convinced that ensuring respect for treaties and other sources of international law is essential for the maintenance of international peace and security, and determined, in accordance with the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained,

Also convinced, in this context, that the repeated violation by Israel, the occupying Power, of international law and its failure to comply with relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the agreements reached between the parties undermine the Middle East peace process and constitute a threat to international peace and security,

Increasingly concerned about the actions of armed Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem,

Aware that, in the circumstances, it should consider the situation with a view to making appropriate recommendations to the States Members of the United Nations, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 377 A (V) of 3 November 1950,

1. Condemns the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a new settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim to the south of occupied East Jerusalem and all other illegal Israeli actions in all the occupied territories;

2. Reaffirms that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that have altered or purported to alter the character, legal status and demographic composition of Jerusalem are null and void and have no validity whatsoever;

3. Reaffirms also that Israeli settlements in all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 are illegal and an obstacle to peace;

4. Demands immediate and full cessation of the construction in Jebel Abu Ghneim and of all other Israeli settlement activities, as well as of all illegal measures and actions in Jerusalem;

1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

2/ See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

5. Demands also that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,1/ to all the territories occupied since 1967, and that it comply with relevant Security Council resolutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

6. Stresses the need to preserve the territorial integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to guarantee the freedom of movement of persons and goods in the territory, including the removal of restrictions into and from East Jerusalem, and the freedom of movement to and from the outside world;

7. Calls for the cessation of all forms of assistance and support for illegal Israeli activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, in particular settlement activities;

8. Recommends to the States that are High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to take measures, on a national or regional level, in fulfilment of their obligations under article 1 of the Convention, to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, of the Convention;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to monitor the situation and to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution, within two months of its adoption, in particular on the cessation of the construction of the new settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim and of all other illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

10. Expresses the need for scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, and urges the sponsors of the peace process, the interested parties and the entire international community to exert all the necessary efforts to revive the peace process and to ensure its success;

11. Recommends that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the City of Jerusalem, which should be reached in permanent status negotiations between the parties, should include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the Holy Places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities;

12. Rejects terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions and declarations;

13. Decides to adjourn the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly to resume its meetings upon request from Member States.

3rd plenary meeting
25 April 1997

II. COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE RECEIVES REPORT ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS; HEARS LAWYERS ON PALESTINIAN RESIDENCY RIGHTS

At the Committee's 229th meeting, held on 28 April, the Chairman briefed Committee members on his participation in the recent meetings of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), held at Tripoli from 24 to 28 February, and the Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi from 4 to 8 April. The Chairman said that, at its meeting, the OAU expressed grave concern about Israel's settlement plans in East Jerusalem, and called for the international community to provide the necessary assistance to the Palestinian Authority during this critical juncture of the peace process. He also informed members that the Non-Aligned Movement had issued a special declaration which called on Member States to reconsider steps taken to normalize relations with Israel in the framework of the peace process, so as to ensure Israel's compliance with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the land-for-peace principle and its full implementation of agreements and commitments on all tracks of the peace talks. He also reported on the recently held General Assembly emergency special session on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The Committee also listened to briefings by Osama Halaby, Palestinian Druze lawyer and former Director of the Legal Department of the Quaker Legal Aid Centre in East Jerusalem, as well as Lea Tsemel, an Israeli lawyer. According to the lawyers, the United Nations had an important role to play in calling on Israel to cease its "quiet deportation" of Palestinians in Jerusalem. The policy of confiscating identification cards from Palestinians and denying them residency and rights in Jerusalem could have a profound effect on the final status negotiations on Jerusalem (see A/AC.183/SR.229 and GA/PAL/744).

III. UNITED NATIONS ASIAN SEMINAR AND NGO SYMPOSIUM HELD AT JAKARTA FROM 5 TO 7 MAY

The United Nations Asian Seminar and Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine on the theme "Achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine - the role of Asia" was held at Jakarta from 4 to 7 May, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 51/23 and 51/24 of 4 December 1996.

The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka , Chairman; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the meeting; Mr. Slaheddine Abdellah (Tunisia); and Mr. Nasser M. Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

The Seminar was attended by representatives of 54 Governments, 5 United Nations bodies and agencies, 1 intergovernmental organization and 21 non-governmental organizations as well as special guests of the Government of Indonesia. Eighteen experts from Asia and other regions presented papers on various topics for discussion.

At the opening session, a statement was made by Mr. Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. A statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations was read out by his representative, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Statements were also made by Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka , Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; Mr. Suleiman Annajab, representative of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization; and Mr. K. M. Khan, representative of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine.

Three panel discussions were conducted, with the participation of experts, as follows:

I. The Middle East peace process: Developments since the signing of the Declaration of Principles in 1993; Mr. Suleiman Annajab, Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization; Mr. Zainuddin Djafar, Head, International Relations Department, University of Indonesia, Jakarta; Mr. Sergej Vadimovich Kirpitchenko, First Deputy Director, Middle East and North African Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation; and Mr. Roscoe S. Suddarth, President, Middle East Institute, Washington, D.C.; Ambassador, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

II. Key issues of a just and comprehensive settlement: Mr. Yang Guang, Professor, Deputy Director-General of the Institute of West Asian and African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Mr. Amien Rais, Professor of Political Science, University of Yogyakarta, Indonesia; Mr. Ron McIntyre, Professor of Political Science, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand; and Mr. Albert Aghazarian, Director for Public Relations, Bir Zeit University, Ramallah.

III. The role of Asia in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine through solidarity and assistance; Dato' Abdullah Ahmad, Ambassador, Special Envoy of Malaysia to the United Nations; Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, Member of Indian Parliament; Mr. Takao Natsume, Regional Coordinator, First Middle East Division, Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan; Mr. Andrew Vincent, Director of Middle East Study Centre, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia; Mr. Fuad Hassan, Member of the Supreme Advisory Council, Former Minister for Education and Culture of Indonesia; Mr. Mourad Ghaleb, President of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt; and Ms. Siham Sikkar, Member, General Union of Palestinian Women.

An NGO workshop entitled "Mobilization and networking of Asian NGOs in support of a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine" was conducted. The participating NGOs also elected a new Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine to facilitate their follow-up activities.

A final document approved by the participants at the concluding session summarized the proceedings as follows:

Participants welcomed the convening of the Asian Seminar and NGO Symposium as an important contribution to continuing efforts to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. They emphasized the significance of the role that the countries of Asia and the Pacific had played, and could continue to play, towards this objective. They particularly welcomed the holding of the meeting in Indonesia because of its prominent role in the region as well as in United Nations bodies, the Movement

of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other intergovernmental organizations, and its long-standing support for the Palestinian people. They commended the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for this significant initiative at a time of great importance for future peace efforts, and expressed the view that this kind of meetings should continue to be held in all regions.

Participants reaffirmed their support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights, including the establishment of their State, with Jerusalem (Al-Quds) as its capital.

Participants expressed support for the Middle East peace process and stressed the need for the full implementation of the agreements reached between the two parties, namely the Declaration of Principles in September 1993 and the Interim Agreement of 1995. In this regard, participants expressed their appreciation for the leading role of the PLO, the Palestinian Authority and President Arafat in support of the peace process.

However, participants expressed serious concern over the current stalemate in the peace process, particularly as a result of the Israeli policies and practices and the fact that the international community had not been able to put an end to actions by Israel that were contrary to the letter and spirit of the agreements reached and obstacles to the progress of the peace process.

It was noted that Israel, the occupying Power, had intensified its policies and practices of land confiscation and settlement in the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, in violation of its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

The repeated closures of the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, and of areas under the Palestinian Authority, and the resulting fragmentation and lack of freedom of movement of persons and goods, as well as the non-implementation of other provisions of the agreements, had resulted in grave economic deterioration and hardship for Palestinians and were cause for anxiety and disappointment.

Concern was expressed that Israel was seeking to impose a final solution on its own terms, in disregard of United Nations resolutions, international opinion and Arab interests, thereby undermining the achievements of the peace process and exacerbating tension in the region.

Participants stressed that the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, are illegal, and pointed out that the settlement policy, and particularly its ongoing intensification by the occupying Power, posed the greatest obstacle to the achievement of a just and lasting peace and made the resumption of negotiations problematic.

They called on all countries to make additional efforts and take collective measures to end that policy, and called on them to refrain from providing assistance that could be used for the further construction and expansion of settlements in occupied lands.

The participants noted the special importance of the Tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly and resolution ES-10/2 overwhelmingly adopted on 24 April 1997. They stressed the importance of the implementation of the said resolution and the follow-up mechanism.

It was pointed out that in October 1991, the Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East, which was called for the by the two co-sponsors, had ushered in a process based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the "land for peace" formula. Those provisions were incorporated in the Declaration of Principles of September 1993 and the subsequent agreements reached between the parties.

It was stressed that no other formula was acceptable to all the parties concerned, and that the co-sponsors of the peace process had a

responsibility to ensure that it would remain on track and proceed towards a successful completion.

Participants stressed the importance of making progress on all tracks of the Middle East peace process starting from the point where it was halted. In this regard, they emphasized the need for Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian territory to the lines of 4 June 1967 and from southern Lebanon and its Western Beqa'a which has been occupied since March 1978.

Participants pointed out that United Nations resolutions had provided clear principles for the settlement of the fundamental issues of the Palestine question, in particular with regard to the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, the invalidity of actions taken by the occupying Power to change the legal status and demographic composition of the occupied territory, including Jerusalem; the right of refugees to return to their homes and property in accordance with resolution 194 (III); and the right of all the countries of the region to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

It was stressed that, as reaffirmed in resolutions of the General Assembly, the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy.

Participants stressed the need to enable the Palestinian people to attain its inalienable national rights, in particular the right to self-determination, and to bring about the desired solution of this long-standing conflict. It was pointed out that progress in the peace process would bring significant benefits to the economic development of all the parties concerned by reducing defence expenditures, increasing foreign and private investment, expanding trade opportunities and making regional cooperation possible, thus enabling the entire Middle East region to play its rightful role in the era of economic globalization.

Participants noted that it was essential to make intensified efforts to inform and mobilize international public opinion on the realities of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, and in particular with regard to Jerusalem, the holy city of three religions - Islam, Judaism, and Christianity - which was of great interest and concern to hundreds of millions of believers worldwide. It was suggested that a fund be set up to pay taxes for Palestinians in Jerusalem who cannot afford to pay taxes and as a result would lose their property to Israeli ownership.

Participants noted that 1997 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the occupation as well as the fiftieth anniversary of General Assembly resolution 181(II) of 29 November 1947, which had partitioned mandated Palestine into two States, with a special status for Jerusalem, and that those anniversaries should provide impetus for intensified international efforts in support of the Palestinian right to self-determination and to establish a Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Participants noted that the countries of Asia have important bonds of kinship with the Palestinians not only because the Middle East is geographically part of the Asian continent but also because of a shared history and spiritual bonds since antiquity.

Through their participation in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Committee of Al-Quds, the United Nations bodies and other international and regional organizations, as well as directly, many Asian countries have provided important political and moral support to the Palestinian efforts to achieve self-determination and independence.

The active participation of panellists from Australia and New Zealand in the seminar, as these countries are closely linked to Asia, proved the deep interest of the peoples of Australia and New Zealand in the peace process in the Middle East.

Participants pointed out that the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine was an integral part of the historical struggle for freedom of Asia and that the role of the Asian countries in support of the Palestinian people could and should be intensified. In particular, the need to remain vigilant with regard to political and other developments in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, was stressed, as recent experience had shown that the peace process had not lessened, but rather increased, the need for solidarity and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period.

They also emphasized that the countries of Asia and the Pacific have an important stake in promoting peace and stability in the Middle East because that region has an essential role to play in the present and future economic development of the entire continent, both as a producer and exporter of energy resources and as a trading partner.

The meeting pointed out that while some Asian and Pacific countries were already making considerable efforts to promote regional economic cooperation and confidence-building through economic assistance, as well as by direct contacts with the parties to the conflict and participation in the multilateral working groups of the peace process, others could be encouraged to expand their activities and contribution in this direction. It was suggested that the Palestinian Authority might consider formulating a list of specific economic requests which might be put to Asian Governments to assist the Palestinian people at this difficult time. It was also suggested that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries might consider setting up a fund, similar to the AFRICA Fund, to assist the Palestinian people during this transitional period.

Opinion leaders and NGOs in Asia and the Pacific were called upon to place the question of solidarity with and assistance to the Palestinian people in the context of the momentous economic development taking place in Asia.

It was stressed that, in the light of their burgeoning prosperity, the Asian countries could easily help undo the negative effects of the years of occupation and restore the deteriorating Palestinian economy. Transfer of technology, vocational training, health and housing were mentioned as important areas in which the Asian and Pacific countries could extend meaningful support and cooperation to the Palestinian people.

It was emphasized that NGOs constitute an emerging force in the changing landscape of international politics. Together with their counterparts in the various regions, and in cooperation with Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, the Asian and Pacific NGOs had worked for many years and should continue to work for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on the relevant United Nations resolutions. Their role in educating and mobilizing public opinion with regard to the fundamental issues of the question of Palestine and in support of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination should continue to be extremely important during the transitional period and should be intensified in the light of the current stalemate in the peace process.

NGOs were called upon to take full advantage of technological advances and existing resources in order to improve their exchange of information and the coordination of their activities despite the expanse and diversity of the Asian and Pacific region.

NGO participants stressed the need to improve their networking and advocacy activities.

They noted that although technological advances had made information easier to obtain, much information available was one-sided and the majority of Asian peoples were not aware of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the difficulties faced by the peace process.

NGOs were called upon to undertake a mobilization campaign of Asian public opinion based on the principles for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestine question contained in United Nations resolutions. Such a campaign should include appeals to all the Asian Governments, mobilization of the mass media, outreach to all NGOs in the region, including trade unions, women and youth groups, private sector and business groups, academic and cultural institutions, with a view to establishing an effective network active in support of peace.

Participants noted, in particular, that Palestinian women are making a highly significant contribution to the political, economic and social development of their nation, and NGOs were called upon to provide support for their efforts. NGOs were also called upon to provide needed assistance for women, particularly the physical and psychological rehabilitation of victims of conflict, widows, children, orphans and the handicapped.

The participants stressed the importance of activities aiming at reconciliation and dialogue, as well as joint projects on matters of common interest and other confidence-building undertakings by women's groups, religious leaders, academic and cultural institutions and others.

The participants expressed their warm appreciation to the President of the Republic of Indonesia, H.E. Mr. Soeharto, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Ali Alatas, to the Government and the people of Indonesia for providing a venue for the Asian Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine and for the excellent facilities, courtesies and warm hospitality extended to them.

A more comprehensive version of the report will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights in due course.

IV. UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE HELD AT AMMAN FROM 20 TO 22 MAY

The United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People on the theme "Palestinian human development needs" was held at Amman from 20 to 22 May under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in accordance with its mandate to promote international support for the and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period.

The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman; Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairman; Mr. George Saliba (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Alounkèo Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic); and Mr. Nasser M. Al-Kidwa (Palestine). The officers of the Committee served as officers of the Seminar in their respective capacities.

The Seminar was attended by representatives of 32 Governments and 14 United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations. Eighteen experts presented papers on various topics for discussion.

At the opening session, a statement was made by Mr. Abdullah Ensour, Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Jordan. A statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations was ready out by his representative Mr. Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief and

Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Statements were also made by Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and Mr. Maher al-Masri, Minister of Economy and Trade, Palestinian Authority, Representative of Palestine.

The Seminar began with a plenary session on "Meeting Palestinian human development needs: the role of the international community". Statements were made by representatives of organizations and entities of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Subsequently, three round-table discussions moderated by experts were conducted, as follows:

I. Sustainable human development as the basis for nation-building

Mr. Rick Hooper (Moderator); Mr. Mohammed Shtayyeh, Director-General, Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), Gaza; Mr. Ibrahim Dakkak, Consultant, Jerusalem; Mr. Abdulkarim Abulhaija, Director of Palestinian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amman, Jordan; and Mr. George Kossaifi, Chief, Human Development Section, ESCWA.

II. Promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development

Part I: Ms. Maria Holt (Moderator); Mr. Hassan Abu Libdeh, President, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Palestinian Authority; Mr. Rick Hooper, Research Director, FAFO Institute for Applied Social Science, Oslo; Mr. Jean-Michel Dumont, Secretary-General, Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation (PAEAC); Mr. Patrick Kane, Director, New York Office, Development Resource Centre, Gaza; and Mr. Thiab Ayyoush, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Palestinian Authority.

Part II: Mr. George Kossaifi (Moderator); Mr. Gil Feiler, Managing Director, Info-Prod Research (Middle East), Ltd., Ramat-Gan, Israel; Ms. Muna Darwizeh, Researcher at the Department of Palestinian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Jordan; Mr. Khondaker Muzammel Huq, General Manager, Grameen Bank, Dhaka, Bangladesh; and Mr. Mira D. Rizeq, Welfare Association, Geneva.

III. Promoting gender equality and the full participation of women in society

Mr. Patrick Kane (Moderator); Ms. Maria Holt, Researcher, British Council, London; Ms. Tathiyyeh Nasru, Associate Professor and Chairperson of the University Programme Education and Development (UPED), Al-Quds University, Jerusalem; Mr. Nader Izzat Sa'id, Consultant, Ramallah; Ms. Zahira Kamal, General Director, Directorate of Gender Planning and Development, MOPIC; Ms. Nahia Qourah, Representative of the Women's Affairs Technical Committee.

In his concluding remarks, the Chairman noted that the deliberations showed unanimous support for the sustainable human development approach and many proposals were made on how to apply it to the Palestinian territory. Participants expressed great concern for the future of the peace process, in view of the policies and actions of the occupying Power and the grave deterioration of Palestinian living conditions. It was stressed that foreign occupation had to end before real human development could take place.

At the request of the Committee Chairman, the final report of the Seminar has been issued in document A/52/179-E/1997/76 for distribution to all members of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. A more comprehensive version of the report will also be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

V. LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES ADOPTS FIVE RESOLUTIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE AND THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

At its 107th regular session, held on 31 March 1997, the Council of the League of Arab States adopted resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. Mr. Ali Sulaiman R. Al-Saeid, Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of April, submitted the following texts on 7 April (A/51/860-S/1997/280; A/51/858-S/1997/281; A/51/859-S/1997/282), and 21 April (A/51/881-S/1997/327; A/51/883-S/1997/330):

107/5628. Question of Jerusalem

The Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

The note by the General Secretariat concerning Jerusalem;

The resolutions of the Arab Summit Conferences;

Its previous resolutions on Jerusalem; and

The recommendation of the Political Affairs Committee,

Affirming the importance of the status of the City of Jerusalem as the core of the Palestine issue,

Recalling the resolutions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies relating to the status of the Holy City,

Bearing in mind that the provisions of the present resolution will serve as a programme of action for the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and for the presidency of the Council,

Decides:

1. To affirm the Arab character of Jerusalem; to uphold the presence of the existing national institutions there and the right of representatives of States to visit Orient House; and to urge the reopening of the institutions closed by the occupation authorities;

2. To urge the States that are the co-sponsors of the peace process to bring pressure to bear on Israel to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions and primarily Security Council resolutions 252 (1968) and 476 (1980), in which the Council considers the measures taken by Israel in the City of Jerusalem to be invalid;

3. To take action to have a session of the General Assembly convened to consider the issue of settlement activity in Jerusalem on the basis of the "Uniting for peace" formula; and to request the United Nations and the relevant international bodies to bring pressure to bear on Israel to lift the siege on the City, to allow Palestinian citizens, Muslims and Christians, to perform their religious rites and to halt the excavations that threaten the Al-Aqsa Mosque;

4. To safeguard the Arab presence in the City of Jerusalem; and to provide support of every kind to Arab citizens in Jerusalem and its Arab environs by establishing productive enterprises, implementing housing programmes and promoting Arab construction activities in the City in order to achieve an Arab majority there;

5. To condemn the Israeli Government in the strongest terms for its decision to begin construction on Jewish settlements in the heart of Jerusalem (in Ras al-Amud and at Jabal Abu Ghneim); and to regard that action as a violation of the agreements

concluded in the framework of the peace process and as constituting open defiance of international legitimacy and a breach of all the relevant United Nations resolutions;

6. To urge the Arab States that had begun to establish relations with Israel to take all possible countermeasures, including the closure of offices and missions, until such time as Israel complies with the agreements concluded between it and the Palestine Liberation Organization and abides by the United Nations resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and, in particular, the question of Jerusalem;

7. To condemn such practices of the Israeli forces as the demolition of the homes and shelters of the Jahalin Bedouin, the seizure of their lands and their eviction for the expansion of the Maaleh Adumim settlement established on their property;

8. To welcome the statement issued by the European Union condemning the decision of the Israeli Government to approve the plans for construction at Jabal Abu Ghneim; and to consider Jerusalem as being subject to the principles set forth in Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and, in particular, to the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force;

9. To support the recommendation of the Al-Quds Committee, under the chairmanship of His Majesty King Hassan II, that the assets of the Al-Quds Fund and Waqf should immediately be placed at the disposal of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority in view of the present conditions in the City of Jerusalem and in order to counter the conspiracy for the Judaization of the City and the settlement campaign;

10. To adopt 28 June, the day Israel proclaimed the annexation of Jerusalem, as an annual day to express rejection of that decision by every means, and primarily by a five-minute Arab general strike and by an extensive media campaign to counter the Israeli policy of depriving Palestinian citizens of their right to reside on their land and in their City by using all manner of illegal means and measures;

11. To take appropriate measures to thwart any Israeli scheme relating to Jerusalem in the Congress of Historic Cities, both through contacts with the Governing Council of the Organization of Historic Cities in Kyoto, Japan, and through contacts with officials in Poland, where the next session of the Congress is to be held;

12. To urge all Arab and Islamic States that have historic cities to apply for membership of the Organization of Historic Cities with a view to safeguarding Arab rights in Jerusalem;

13. To continue to coordinate action by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference relating to the situation of the City of Jerusalem and measures for its Judaization; and to take joint action to convene a seminar on Jerusalem, as decided by the Council at its previous session in its resolution 5581 C of 15 September 1996;

14. To request the Secretary-General to establish the necessary contacts with international and regional organizations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations in order to consider appropriate means of preserving the cultural and religious heritage of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Resolution 107/5628
One hundred and seventh regular session
3rd meeting
31 March 1997

107/5629. The Arab-Israeli conflict and Israel's sabotage of the ongoing peace process

The Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered the latest developments and imminent dangers and the obstacles raised by Israel with a view to sabotaging the ongoing peace process,

Being committed to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region and to salvaging the peace process,

Recommends:

1. That the steps taken towards normalization with Israel in the framework of the ongoing peace process should be halted, and that dealings with Israel should be suspended, together with closure of offices and missions, until such time as Israel complies with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and the principle of land for peace and implements the agreements, undertakings and commitments reached by the parties concerned, on all tracks, during the peace talks;

2. That Arab participation in the multilateral negotiations should be suspended, and that commitment to the Arab boycott should be maintained in the forefront and should be kept in effect vis-à-vis Israel until such time as a just and comprehensive peace is achieved in the region.

Resolution 107/5629
One hundred and seventh regular session
3rd meeting
31 March 1997

107/5630. Settler colonialism in the occupied Palestinian territory

The Council of the League of Arab States,

Having considered:

The note by the Secretariat concerning settler colonialism in the occupied Palestinian territory;

The recommendation made by the Conference of Arab Officials Responsible for Palestinian Affairs in the Host Countries at its fifty-seventh session;

Its previous resolutions and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

The recommendation of the Political Affairs Committee,

Having been informed of the expansionist plans of the Israeli authorities, the expropriation of land, the escalation of settlement activity and the statements of Israeli leaders calling for the expansion of settlements,

Decides:

1. To affirm that the resolutions embodying international legitimacy must be implemented, in particular Security Council resolution 465 (1980) calling upon Israel to halt all settlement activity and to dismantle the existing settlements; and to affirm that settlement activities are in violation of the Geneva Conventions and the Madrid framework and constitute an impediment to the peace process;

2. To reject and condemn all Israeli settlement practices, especially the latest plan for settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim; and to warn against the consequences of pursuing this policy, which is having a serious impact on the peace process and threatening to destroy it;

3. To urge the international community and all States providing economic and financial assistance to Israel, in particular the United States and the countries of the European Union, as well as the international donor institutions and funds, to halt assistance that is used by Israel to implement settlement plans in the occupied Palestinian territory;

4. To support and endorse the measures taken by the competent authorities of the State of Palestine to form popular local committees to defend Palestinian land and counter Israeli violations;

5. To affirm the need to implement League Council resolution 5582 on the convening, in the second half of 1997, of an international seminar on

settlement activity highlighting the dangerous character of the underlying concepts and practical implications of Israeli settler colonialism.

Resolution 107/5630
One hundred and seventh regular session
3rd meeting
31 March 1997

Res. 5633. The occupied Syrian Arab Golan

- A -

The Council of the League of Arab States,

Having examined the note of the General Secretariat and the recommendation of the Political Affairs Committee,

Having consulted the communiqué issued by the Special Arab Summit Conference held in Cairo from 21 to 23 June 1996, concerning the declaration by Arab leaders that a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 is essential in order to achieve a comprehensive and just peace, and that the building of settlements in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and the attracting of settlers thereto constitute a violation of the Geneva Conventions and the Madrid Peace Conference, and an obstacle to the peace process,

Following with increased concern and apprehension the continued Israeli occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan, Israel's persistent refusal to apply the United Nations resolutions and to submit to the will of the international community, which considers the Israeli occupation and its decision to annex the Syrian Arab Golan as null and void and lacking validity,

Having carefully studied the situation in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan in the light of the practices of the Israeli occupying authorities in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international treaties, international law, the United Nations resolutions and the peace process,

Recalling its earlier resolutions as well as international resolutions affirming the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

Decides:

1. To reaffirm its resolution 4126 of 13 January 1982 and subsequent resolutions, the most recent being resolution 5542 of 21 March 1996, which provides that all measures adopted by the Israeli occupying authorities with a view to altering the juridical, natural and demographic situation in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan are to be rejected and that Israeli measures to extend Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Arab Golan are to be considered as unlawful and null and void and as constituting a violation of international agreements, the Charter of the United Nations and the United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981), General Assembly resolution 51/28 of 4 December 1996, which affirmed that the Israeli decision of 14 December 1981 annexing the occupied Syrian Arab Golan was unlawful and null and void and that the Knesset decision of 11 November 1991 for the same purpose was null and void and without validity and constituted a grave violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981);

2. To call upon the sponsors of the peace process and the international community to assume their responsibility for compelling Israel to comply with the applicable international resolutions calling for complete withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and to assist Syria in its firm position of commitment to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region;

3. To support the resistance of the Syrian Arab nationals and stand by them in their opposition to Israel's occupation and repressive practices, their persistence in clinging to their land and their Syrian Arab identity, and to reaffirm the applicability of the

1949 Geneva Convention to the citizens of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan;

4. To appeal to the international community, and especially the sponsors of the Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East, to prevail upon Israel to implement the United Nations resolutions on complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and from the occupied Arab territories;

5. To reaffirm the resolute support of the Arab States for Syria's just claim and its right to the return of all the occupied Syrian Arab Golan, based on the foundations of the peace process and the United Nations resolutions;

6. To adhere to the legitimate international resolutions that refuse to recognize or accept any situation resulting from Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Arab territories, considering that such activity is unlawful and creates no rights or obligations, and considering also that the building of settlements and the attracting of settlers thereto constitute a violation of the Geneva Conventions, the Madrid Peace Conference, and an obstacle to the peace process, which calls for an end to all Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Syrian Golan and occupied Arab territories.

- B -

The Council of the League,

Expressing its extreme concern with regard to Israel's continued attempts to thwart the will of the international community and its obduracy in upholding decisions to annex territory which the international community considers null and void, particularly the Knesset decision of 13 March 1996 to approve the preliminary reading of the draft law concerning consolidation of the annexation of the Golan,

Decides:

1. To condemn any attempts to consolidate the occupation of the Syrian Golan, considering such attempts as being in defiance of the will of the international community and of legitimate international resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which declares Israeli measures in the Golan null and void;

2. To condemn Israeli threats against Syria intended to escalate tension in the region and destroy the peace process.

Resolution 5633,
One hundred and seventh regular session,
3rd session,
31 March 1997.

Res. 5634: The Israeli occupation of parts of southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa and the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978)

The Council of the League of Arab States,

Having examined the note of the General Secretariat and the recommendation of the Political Affairs Committee,

Noting Israel's continued occupation of parts of southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa in flagrant violation of international law and in continuing disregard of Security Council resolution 425 (1978),

Noting also with concern the daily acts of aggression carried out by Israel on Lebanese territory,

Recalling with regret the savage Israeli aggression to which Lebanon, particularly in the southern regions and the western Bekaa, was subjected in April 1996,

Reaffirming Lebanon's right to compensation for the human casualties and damage it suffers owing to repeated Israeli attacks and for the oppressive practices against the peaceful inhabitants of southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa that result from the Israeli occupation,

Recalling the Council's resolutions on Arab solidarity with the Lebanese Government for an end to the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory, the most recent of which were its resolution 5586 (CVI) of 15 September 1996 and resolution 5573 adopted by the Council at its extraordinary session on 17 April 1996, the resolutions adopted by the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Arab Summit Conferences and the final communiqué of the Arab Summit Conference held in Cairo on 23 June 1996, calling for support and assistance to the Lebanese Government for the rebuilding of the country, and supporting it in confronting the continued acts of Israeli aggression carried out against its territory, people and sovereignty,

Decides:

1. To condemn Israel in the strongest terms for its continued occupation of parts of southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa; and to call upon the international community, and upon the United Nations and all its associated bodies in particular, to strive for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) calling for Israel's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territory to the internationally recognized boundaries;

2. To condemn Israel in the strongest terms for its persistence in making repeated attacks on Lebanese territory; and to appeal to the international community, international organizations and their member States to bring pressure to bear on Israel to pay compensation to Lebanon for the damage caused by its repeated attacks on Lebanese territory, particularly for the attack it launched against Lebanon during April 1996, and to take action to halt the inhumane and oppressive Israeli practices against the peaceful inhabitants of occupied Lebanese territory in the south and the western Bekaa;

3. To reaffirm its support for the efforts of the Lebanese State to extend its sovereignty and authority over all its territory, including the areas occupied by Israel in southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa;

4. To reaffirm the need for States members of the League of Arab States to implement Council resolution 5213 of 5 July 1992 calling for the provision of the assistance for the reconstruction of Lebanon allocated by them at their Tenth Summit Conference;

5. To extend its thanks to those States members of the League of Arab States that have provided the Lebanese Government with financial assistance, and to urge other member States also to make their contributions in order to support Lebanon's resolute stand and rebuild the country.

Resolution 5634,
One hundred and seventh regular session,
3rd meeting,
31 March 1997.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE ADOPTS SPECIAL DECLARATION ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

At the extraordinary session of the Islamic Summit held in Islamabad on 23 March, the Sovereign Heads of State and Government of the Organization of the Islamic Conference adopted a Special Declaration on the question of Palestine, on Jerusalem (Al-Quds Al-Sharif) and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The text of the declaration is reproduced below (see A/51/915-S/1997/433):

Special Declaration on the cause of Palestine, Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Arab-Israeli conflict

We, the Sovereigns, Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, assembled in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on Sunday 13 Dhul Qi'dah 1417H, corresponding to 23 March 1997, for the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit, having reviewed the serious situation prevailing in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and Palestine and which constitutes the central cause of the Islamic Ummah; hereby:

1. Affirm our support of the Middle East peace process and the implementation of all agreements signed within its framework between the concerned parties as well as all commitments and pledges made in accordance with the basis and terms of the Madrid Conference and the United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and the "land for peace" principle which guarantees Israel's total withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories to the lines of 4 June 1967 including the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the Syrian Golan as well as South Lebanon and the Western Bekaa occupied since 14 March 1978, and call upon Israel to reaffirm its adherence to its commitments given during the negotiations and resume them on the Syrian track from the point at which they stopped, as well as call for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent State on their national soil, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital;

2. Confirm that Al-Quds Al-Sharif is an integral part of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 subject to whatever is applicable to the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories. Demand the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council on Al-Quds Al-Sharif, especially resolutions 252 (1968), 267 (1969), 271 (1969), 465 (1980), 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 1073 (1996), and General Assembly resolution 223/51 (1997). Call on the United Nations to take the necessary measures to compel Israel to immediately halt its confiscation of Palestinian territory and the construction of new settlements especially in Jabal Abu Ghneim in South East Al-Quds, and not to effect any geographic or demographic changes in the City of Al-Quds during the interim phase, and to desist from taking any action or measure which may have any implication on the negotiations on the final status of the City;

3. Affirm our continued resolve to strengthen our solidarity with the Palestinian people as well as to support the positions of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the National Authority in the negotiations aimed at realizing total Israeli withdrawal from all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, establishing its authority over all Palestinian territories including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and finding just and durable solutions to all issues, foremost of which is the issue of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the refugees, the settlements, the borders and water in accordance with resolutions of the international legality;

4. Commend the continued efforts of His Majesty Hassan II, King of Morocco, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee and Chairman of the Seventh Islamic Summit Conference, aimed at promoting the

steadfastness of the citizens of the City of Al- Quds Al-Sharif in confronting the challenges facing them, and restoring the City to its legitimate owners;

5. Strongly condemn Israel's persistence in its settlement expansionist policies in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the rest of the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. Consider these policies and measures to be inconsistent with all international treaties, conventions and resolutions, particularly the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and constitute a serious threat to the peace process. Also invite the international community to compel Israel to fully implement all the agreements concluded in the framework of the peace process in accordance with their timetable and to lift the blockade imposed on the City of Al-Quds and to stop implementing all Israeli decisions, measures and practices related to Jewish settlements, land confiscation, destruction of houses, withdrawal of the identity cards of the citizens of Al-Quds, excavation works around the Holy Quds Mosque and the desecration of Islamic and Christian holy shrines;

6. Urge Member States to review relations with Israel and make them contingent on the progress achieved in the peace process, and on the extent to which Israel complies with United Nations resolutions and with the agreements, commitments and obligations reached by the parties concerned by the peace process.

VII. INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM

At its 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held at Seoul on 29 April, the Inter-Parliamentary Union adopted without a vote a resolution on Jerusalem. The text of the resolution is reproduced below:

The 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Reaffirming its support for the Middle East peace process and all its achievements,

Recalling once more the resolutions adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to bolster efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East,

Also recalling United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for the revocation of any and all Israeli measures and actions designed to alter the legal status, the demographic composition and geographical structure of Jerusalem and considering such measures invalid,

Expressing deep concern at the new settlement activities in Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, and in particular at the construction of a settlement at the Jabal Abu Ghneim area in East Jerusalem,

Stressing that these settlements are illegal, in breach of international law and a major obstacle to peace,

Concerned about the difficulties facing the Middle East peace process and their negative impact on the living conditions of all peoples of the region, and more especially the Palestinian people,

Deploring the increasing recourse to violence since the dangerous stalling of the peace process,

Reaffirming resolutions adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, particularly at the 77th, 81st, 84th and 90th Conferences, on bolstering efforts to give impetus to peace moves in the Middle East,

1. Denounces the Israeli settlement policy in the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem;

2. Calls upon the Israeli authorities to refrain from all actions or measures, including settlement

activities, which alter the facts on the ground, pre-empting the final status negotiations, and have negative implications for the Middle East peace process;

3. Calls upon Israel, as the occupying power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations under the Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949;

4. Calls upon all parties, and especially Israelis and Palestinians, to continue and speed up, in the interests of peace and security, their negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed bases, and Israel in particular to implement within the prescribed time-limits the agreements concluded, and in particular the Oslo Agreements;

5. Calls upon the Israeli government to desist from confiscating the identity cards of the Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem and to revoke the policy that prevents them from repairing their homes or building new ones to meet their urgent housing needs;

6. Urgently appeals, as part of the peace process, for an end to acts of violence and terrorism, whatever their source;

7. Appeals to the United Nations to bring its influence to bear forthwith in order to protect all citizens, all institutions and all historical monuments in Jerusalem, and particularly the Palestinian institutions pending the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and the achievement of peace;

8. Recommends that the situation in Jerusalem be monitored through the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions, which will report to the Inter-Parliamentary Council in Cairo (September 1997).